4

Measuring Up

Key References: Titus 1; *The Acts of the Apostles,* chaps. 9, 29, 31, pp. 87-96, 298-301, 323, 324; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 152-155; Our Beliefs, nos 22, 12, 14















power**text**

"The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11, 12).

power**point**

We reveal God's love by living God's way.

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 33.

Isn't it fun to get something in the mail? Who is the favorite person you like to receive mail from? Today in our story Titus gets a special letter from Paul. Let's find out what it said.

Titus had just finished reading Paul's letter. He was glad Paul had sent a detailed description of the kind of person an elder should be. This would make Titus's selection process easier. Paul had left Titus in Crete when he went to Ephesus. Titus felt honored that Paul thought he could finish the work here.

"'. . . must not be guilty of doing wrong. He must have only one wife' " (Titus 1:6),* Titus added quietly.

"This will be hard," he murmured. Some of the men had more than one wife or weren't faithful even to one. Others treated their wives like slaves.

"'His children must be believers.'" This was even harder. Many of the members had children who had been corrupted by false teachers and worshipped other gods.

"'They must not be known as children who are wild and who do not obey'" (verse 6). Some of the children—who were actually young adults—took part in the drunken worship of the god Dionysus. When their parents converted, they hadn't. And, of course, in their half-drunken state they weren't going to submit to their father's authority as a church leader.

4

Sunday

READ Read Titus 1 and this week's story, "Measuring Up."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text Titus 2:11, 12.

REMEMBER Is there anyone in your family who is good at writing letters? Can you think of a time when they wrote you a special letter?

PRAY Thank God for His letter, the Bible.

Monday

READ Read Titus 1:6.

THINK Why was it important that an elder's children be believers who obey their parents?

WRITE In your Bible journal write some things that an elder's children may have been expected to do.

PRAY Ask God to help you respond in obedience to Him and to your parents.

Tuesday

READ Read Titus 1:7.

LIST Make a list in your Bible study journal of the qualifications for an elder.

DISCOVER Who are the elders in your church? How are they elected? What happens when one is chosen?

PRAY Say a special prayer for the elders in your church.

"'He must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent'" (verse 7, NIV). "Titus had seen plenty of violence in the name of the Lord. Some of the new believers had tried to force their religion on their families.

"'And he must not be a person who always tries to get rich by cheating people'" (verse 7). A Cretan (person from Crete) wouldn't be a Cretan without loving money, one of their own philosophers had said. The Cretans' reputation was so bad that one of the slang words for lying was to "cretize."

Titus sighed heavily and skipped down a few lines. "'An overseer must faithfully follow the truth just as we teach it. He must be able to help people by using true and right teaching. And he must be able to show those who are against the true teaching that they are wrong'" (verse 9).

False teaching and teachers were probably the biggest problems the believers faced. It wasn't just in Crete. It was everywhere. But there were many Jews in Crete, both inside and outside the church. The ones inside the church tried to place a lot of restrictions on the new members. Some wanted every non-Jew to be circumcised. The ones outside tried to get members to pay to listen to their teaching. Not only that, the people of Crete had confused the true believers with the other Jews. As a result, Christians did not have a good reputation in this city. Anyone chosen as an elder would need to have a character that stood far above everyone—even other so-called Christians.

And he would have to be a real diplomat—an ambassador for God—to deal with the different groups. He would have to be nearly perfect in following the



Wednesday

READ Read Titus 1:8.

CREATE Create a poem or song expressing your desire to live a life that praises God.

THINK Think about a leader you admire. What qualities from Paul's list does this person have?

PRAY Say a special prayer for that leader.

Thursday

READ Read Titus 1:9.

THINK Identify people today who teach wrong ideas.

COMPARE Compare the wrong teachings indicated in Titus with those that Jesus and the apostles repeatedly warned against. Read Titus 1:10-14; Mark 13:22; Acts 20:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 2 Peter 3:3-7.

PRAY Ask God to help open your mind to recognize and avoid error.

Friday

READ Read Titus 2:7, 8.

IMAGINE With your family at worship, imagine you were a church leader with Titus on Crete. What would you have found the most difficult to deal with?

LIST As a family, list the leadership qualities each of you has.

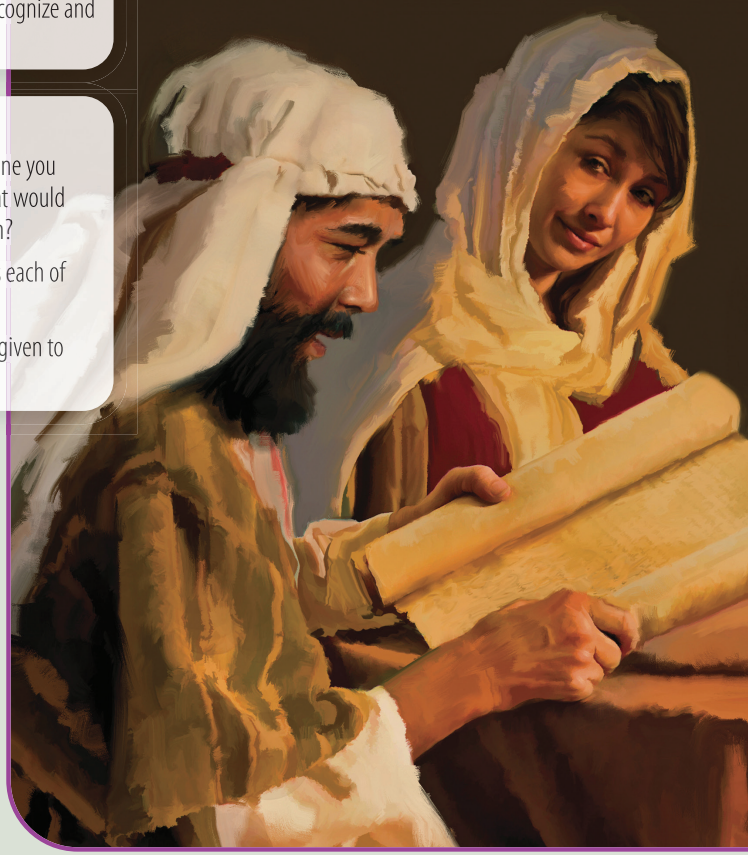
COMMIT Thank God for the qualities He has given to you. Commit them to His work.

truth. And when he had to set people straight, he would have to be very tactful. He had to know how to say things so that he didn't drive people away or keep them from joining. Being an elder carried tremendous responsibilities.

Titus looked at the letter again and decided to call in some people from the home churches. *They know these people better than I do,* he said to himself. *Maybe they can help me choose some good candidates as elders.*

"Paul sent a long list of qualifications for elders," Titus explained when the people assembled.

"Maybe you should read them one by



one so we can compare them with the people we know," said one man.

Titus read the qualifications.

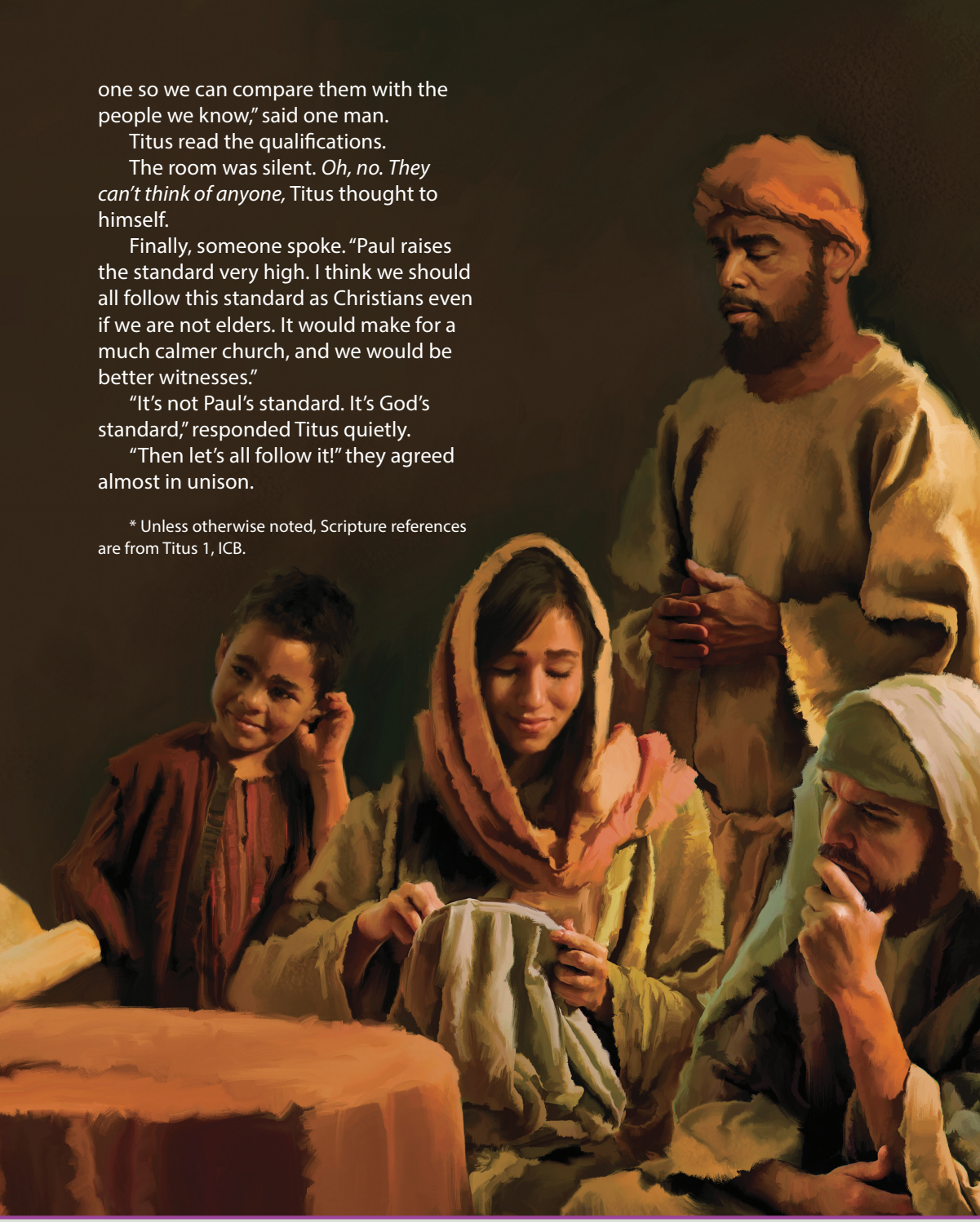
The room was silent. *Oh, no. They can't think of anyone,* Titus thought to himself.

Finally, someone spoke. "Paul raises the standard very high. I think we should all follow this standard as Christians even if we are not elders. It would make for a much calmer church, and we would be better witnesses."

"It's not Paul's standard. It's God's standard," responded Titus quietly.

"Then let's all follow it!" they agreed almost in unison.

* Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are from Titus 1, ICB.



LOVE EACH OTHER

Instructions: If you choose one letter from each ring, starting from the outside and working to the center, you can find three words that make up part of a Bible verse concerning others. You may use each letter only once.

